

Rare Animals of Louisiana



Sandhill Crane

Grus canadensis

Rarity Rank: S1N/G5

	1	2	3	4	5
State					
Global					
	imperiled		rare		secure

Identification:

- Grey in color, often with varying degrees of rust coloration throughout
- Long legs and bill are black
- Dull red skin on crown and lores, whitish chin, cheek and upper throat
- Up to 1.2 m tall
- In flight, neck is extended and wingspan is 6 to 7 feet
- Sexes similar in plumage
- Immature birds lack red patch, and grey body is irregular mottled with brownish-red
- Full adult plumage is reached after 2 and one-half years



Photo by Dan Lane

Taxonomic comments:

- There are 3 to 6 subspecies of Sandhill Crane
- Individuals that reside in Louisiana belong to *Grus canadensis tabida*, the Mid-continent Gulf Coast population

Habitat:

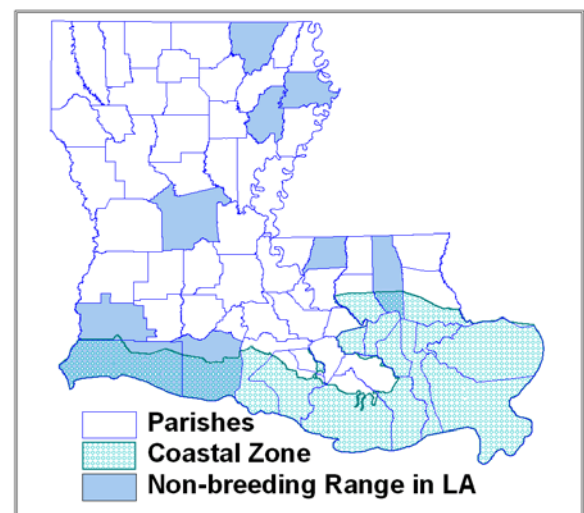
Prairies, fields and marshes

Food habits:

- Omnivorous
- Plant roots, seeds, grains, insects, occasionally small animals
- Diet dependent upon local availability and season

Range:

- Throughout North America
- Breeds mostly in Canada although historically bred throughout the Midwestern plains
- Winters along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico and in southwest U.S.



Range based on occurrences in Natural Heritage database

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Reproduction:

- Breeding does not begin until birds are 2 to 7 years of age
- Pairs mate for life
- Nests are constructed on the ground with vegetation such as sticks and grass
- Clutches consist of two eggs that range in color from pale green to spotted brown
- Males and females share incubation duties equally during day light hours; females primarily at night

Threats:

- Loss of wetlands habitat and coastal land loss
- Hunting

Beneficial Management Practices:

- Preserve wetland habitat
- Educate the public

LA River Basins:

Pontchartrain, Mississippi, Vermilion-Teche,
Mermentau, Calcasieu, Sabine, Red River, Ouachita



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Sandhill crane chick

Photo by Larry Korhnak

References:

Lowery, G. H. 1974. Louisiana Birds. 3rd Ed. Kingsport Press, Tennessee.

Peterson, R.T., and V.M. Peterson. 1980. A field guide to the birds: A completely new guide to all the birds of Eastern and Central North America. 4th Ed. Houghton Mifflin Company, New York.

Tacha, T. C., S. A. Nesbitt, and P.A. Vohs. 1992. Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*). In The Birds of North America, No. 31 (A. Poole, P. Stettenheim, and F. Gill, Eds.). Philadelphia: The Academy of Natural Sciences; Washington, DC: The American Ornithologists' Union.

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For more information, please visit our Web pages at

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